

Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity.
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an equality analysis.

Directorate: Assistant Chief Exec	Service area: PII
Lead person: Jackie Mould	Contact number: 54419

1. Title: Consultation and Engagement Policy

Is this a:

☒

Strategy / Policy

☒

Service / Function

☐

Other

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

Public consultation and engagement is an important part of improving the quality of services provided by Rotherham Council and its partners, and needs to be given a high priority. A modern council engages with its residents and listens to their views to help shape and design services and inform policy making.

With an increased demand for services coupled with a reduction in public sector budgets, there is a need to change the way in which Council services are delivered. There is now an emphasis to deliver more streamlined services with greater efficiency, with a focus on multi-disciplinary working and increased involvement from communities in shaping local services.

The new policy meets with a number of the Council's strategic objectives, including the Council Plan's priority of being a 'modern and efficient Council,' by contributing to 'responsiveness to local need and accountability to citizens'. It also ties in with the

Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy, which is about the Council and residents working together to achieve better outcomes and improve the quality of life in Rotherham.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?	x	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?		x
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	x	
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?	x	
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment Advancing equality of opportunity Fostering good relations 	x	

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality and diversity within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality and diversity within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality and diversity you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**
(think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related

information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

This policy sets out the Council's commitment to consult and engage with the public. To enable the Council to engage effectively with our residents we will:

- Listen, inform and work in partnership with service users and stakeholders, and wherever possible include their views in the shaping, commissioning and delivery of services;
- Comply with the public sector equality duty;
- Comply with current legislation around consultation and engagement;
- Embed a clear and consistent approach to consultation and community engagement;
- Ensure all staff adhere to the RMBC Standards for Consultation and Engagement when engaging with the public and stakeholders
- Make the best use of resources by building on existing community engagement exercises and share across the Council and partners, as far as possible, the results of community engagement which will help to avoid duplication and consultation fatigue;
- Maintain a corporate overview of consultation and engagement to ensure alignment between different areas of the Council, that the content of consultations are appropriate and that the process meets Equality and Diversity standards; and
- Provide feedback on consultations in a timely manner and in an appropriate format, including how the council has responded to the findings of consultation.

Achieving the objectives of the policy requires everyone to be able to access and consultation and engagement processes without facing barriers irrespective of their personal circumstances.

- **Key findings**

(think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

The policy is overarching, to be complied with in the design of consultations and engagement. Each consultation and engagement exercise will be different. Changes in subject matter and potentially different and key target audiences with specific needs means that each exercise will need to be tailored in accordance with the policy.

- **Actions**

(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/ reduce negative impact)

The policy is accompanied by a toolkit giving step by step guidance for each consultation and engagement exercise in addition to explaining the overall objectives of the policy.

The toolkit sets out at 2.7 the requirements of the policy to comply with equalities legislation and detail of protected characteristics. It also makes clear that an equalities assessment is required for each exercise as part of its design.

A link to equality monitoring requirements is included.

Advice is provided at 3.8 giving details of support available from Rotherham Equalities Community Reference Group.

Compliance with the specific equalities provisions in the toolkit, alongside the broader set of advice and good practice will ensure that equalities barriers to engagement will be overcome and an equalities approach is embedded taking forward the public sector equality duty.

5. If you are **not already considering the impact on equality and diversity you **will need to carry out an Equality Analysis****

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	
Date to complete your Equality Analysis	
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title)	

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

Name	Job title	Date
Jackie Mould	Head of PII	29 th March 2019

7. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given. If you are not carrying out an independent Equality Analysis the screening document will need to be published.

If this screening relates to a **Key Delegated Decision, Executive Board, full Council** or a **Significant Operational Decision** a copy should be emailed to Corporate Governance and will be published along with the relevant report.

A copy of all other screenings should be sent to Zaidah.ahmed@rotherham.gov.uk. For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file (but not published).	
Date screening completed	3 rd June 2019
If relates to a Key Decision - date sent to Cabinet	
Any other decision – date sent to Equalities Officer Zaidah.ahamed@rotherham.gov.uk	3 rd June 2016